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AUTHOR	Kelly, Deirdre, Ed.; Gaskell, Jane, Ed.
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ABSTRACT

A new, prevailing wisdom is guiding the thinking of policy makers and policy shapers throughout North America; its watchwords are "global competitiveness" and "economic restructuring." The preoccupation with viewing schooling and its role in society through the single lens of global economic competitiveness closes off other valid ways of looking at and imagining policies for dropouts. This book examines the debate in the United States and in Canada by offering a collection of chapters that challenge the dominant discourse. The foreword is by Michelle Fine. Part 1, "Current Policy Frames in North America: Exploring the Dominant Stance," includes three chapters: (1) "Unfinished Business? The Dropout Goes to Work in Education Policy Reports" (Kari Dehli); (2) "Lifelong Learning: Between Utopia and Economic Imperatives" (Kjell Rubenson); and (3) "The Dependency of Independence: At Risk Youth, Economic Self-Sufficiency, and Curricular Change" (Nancy Lesko). The four chapters in part 2, "Framing Research on Dropping Out of and Returning to School," include: (4) "Coming to Terms with Marginal Work: Dropouts in a Polarized Labor Market" (Harvey Krahn and Julian Tanner); (5) "Dropping Out in Canada: The Construction of a Crisis?" (Paul Anisef and Lesley Andres); (6) "'Choosing' the Alternative: Conflicting Missions and Constrained Choice in a Dropout Prevention Program" (Deirdre M. Kelly); and (7) "What If You Organized a Reform and Nothing Changed? The Fate of Culturally Compatible Curricula in an American Indian Public School District" (Margaret D. LeCompte). Part 3, "Reframing the Issues: Speaking from Elsewhere," contains the following three chapters: (8) "Debating 'Dropouts': The Moral Panic and the Spectacle Over 'Youth at Risk'" (Leslie G. Roman); (9) "Black Youth and Fading Out of School" (George J. Sefa Dei); and (10) "Government Funded Job-Entry Programs for Women: Whose Needs Are Being Addressed?" (Shauna Butterwick). Chapter references and an index are included. (LMI)